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24 Indiana Counties Receive Disaster Designation

Today Governor Mitch Daniels and Lt. Governor Becky Skillman announced that 24 Indiana counties received disaster designation from the U.S. Department of Agriculture due to poor crop yields caused by severe drought conditions last summer. This designation makes farmers eligible for low-interest emergency loans from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

“Most of Indiana fared well in terms of weather and crop yields, but we knew that the lack of rain last summer was going to create problems in pockets of our state,” said Lt. Governor Becky Skillman, who also serves as Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development. “These disaster designations will allow assistance for Hoosier farmers who need it.”

The following Indiana counties have been designated primary natural disaster areas due to drought and high temperatures that occurred beginning May 1, 2005:

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| 1. Bartholomew | 9. Jasper | 17. Porter |
| 2. Clark | 10. Jefferson | 18. Posey |
| 3. Crawford | 11. Kosciusko | 19. Scott |
| 4. Dearborn | 12. Lake | 20. St. Joseph |
| 5. Elkhart | 13. LaPorte | 21. Starke |
| 6. Floyd | 14. Newton | 22. Switzerland |
| 7. Harrison | 15. Ohio | 23. Warrick |
| 8. Jackson | 16. Orange | 24. Washington |

In addition to the 24 counties which are designated as disaster areas, 25 contiguous counties are also eligible for federal emergency loan assistance. Among the contiguous counties in the area are: Benton, Brown, Decatur, Dubois, Franklin, Fulton, Gibson, Jennings, Johnson, LaGrange, Lawrence, Marshall, Martin, Monroe, Noble, Perry, Pike, Pulaski, Ripley, Shelby, Spencer, Vanderburgh, Wabash, White and Whitley.

Farmers in primary and contiguous disaster areas may contact their local FSA office for further information on emergency loan programs. FSA will consider each application on its own merit by taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability.

Lt. Governor Skillman and Agriculture Director Andy Miller receive regular briefings on the outlook for the year's crops and livestock. Indiana officials requested this disaster designation in September 2005 due to losses in crop yields caused by cool, wet weather followed by a drought that occurred from May 1, 2005, through August 31, 2005. They and others from the Indiana State Department of Agriculture have been monitoring this situation and stand ready to assist those impacted by the adverse crop conditions.

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